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(54) **Force control strut**

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a strut for controlling movement of a movable member such as a hood, top, door, hinged cover or other devices, which strut changes the force encountered by the movable element at various positions to thereby control motion.

[0002] The invention involves an elongated strut incorporating a compression spring or springs to control the force exerted on a movable element by either retracting or extending the strut. The movable element controls a structure such as a pivoted door or hood so the strut controls motion by controlling force. It is known to use an elongated strut having a cylindrical tube with a reciprocating element biased by one or more coil springs so the force of movement changes at different linear positions. A representative strut is shown in Adoline (US Pat. No. 6,773,002). Such elongated strut with coil springs controlling the linear force and, thus, movement has been modified to provide a damper mechanism carried by the extendable and retractable rod movable with respect to the tubular housing constituting the supporting structure of the strut. A dampened strut is described in US Patent Publication No. US 2004/0222579. Utilizing these two patented items, the purpose and operation of a motion controlled strut is known technology and need not be repeated.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0003] Coil spring elongated struts mentioned above utilize compression springs; however, these struts are not effective in controlling and selectively dampening the motion of the member to which they are attached. The prior art method for controlling the motion of an extendable strut is to match the compression spring rod loads to the application load, such as the weight of an automobile hood or trunk.

[0004] Due to design limitation it is not always practical to exactly match or offset the load of the movable strut as it swings through its arc of movement. Consequently, closing speed of the hood or trunk lid varies throughout the movement stroke of these devices. There is a need to control motion of movement at a desired rate in various positions of the total travel.

[0005] WO 83/02096 A1 discloses a self-centering shock dampening stabilizer for connection between a fixed point on a vehicle main frame member and a moving point in the steering linkage which interconnects the vehicle steerable wheels and steering gear. The stabilizer embodies a hydraulic cylinder in conjunction with a coil spring snubber which includes two opposing coils of equal tension acting on the opposite ends of the snubber and also acting on fixed elements at one end of the hydraulic cylinder and at the centre of the snubber. A piston rod is fixed as by welding or otherwise to end plate of a larger cylindrical tube or shell which telescopes over the stabilizer.

THE INVENTION

[0006] The invention is defined in the claims.

[0007] The design of the present invention encompasses the concept of using a well known compression spring rod, such as shown in Adoline (US Pat. No. 6,773,002) wherein the compression spring strut replaces the solid movable rod with a rod having an internal damper mechanism. The invention utilizes a damper in combination with the rod of the prior art compression spring rod type strut. The damper used in the present invention is designed for low force, motion control applications. The damper can be used to allow the compression spring rod to compress at a controlled rate while extending without any dampening action. The invention involves combining a damper mechanism with a standard compression spring type of strut to provide force control during movement of a rod member in the compression direction.

[0008] In accordance with the invention, there is provided a force control strut which causes a controlled force during at least part of the stroke of a compression spring strut. The force or motion control strut comprises an elongated housing having a straight guide tube with inner cylindrical surface and axially opposite first and second ends. A rod member has an inner end reciprocally movable inside the housing and along the guide tube and an outer end extending outwardly from the first end of the housing. A guide member is secured to the first end of the housing to form a bushing allowing reciprocation of the rod member axially in the housing between a retracted position with the rod collapsed in the housing and an extended position with the rod protruding from the housing. At the bottom of the guide tube there is a fixed plug that closes the end of the housing. A cylindrical guide piston is fixed to the inner end of the movable rod and is slidable along the inner cylindrical surface of the tube. Between the piston and one end of the housing is a coil spring that biases the rod in a given direction in the housing. As so far described, the strut is like the compression spring rod shown in Adoline (US Pat. No. 6,773,002). The coil spring forces the rod member outwardly so that closing a member using the strut is balanced by the reactive force of the coil spring. In this manner, the strut exerts a force on the movable element controlled by the strut either in the retracted closing position or the extending opening position. To add a further control force during movement of the rod, a damper mechanism is combined with the movable rod. The damper mechanism includes a plunger reciprocally mounted in an elongated force controlled passageway inside the movable rod. The plunger of the damper mechanism is movable outwardly from an end of the rod facing inside the elongated housing. The distal end of the plunger is engageable with the bottom plug closing the housing. In this manner, the plunger is forced into the passageway to create a controlled force dampening movement of the operating rod in the housing.

[0009] In one embodiment, the main coil spring is located between the bottom plug and the guide piston of the rod. In another embodiment of the invention, the main coil spring is between the guide member and the guide piston. Consequently, the rod of the strut is either biased in the extended position or the retracted position according to the location of the main coil spring. To add the force controlling action of the damper mechanism, the distal end of the plunger merely abuts against the bottom plug as the rod member is retracted. Consequently, the damper force occurs only after the retraction or compression motion of the rod has caused the plunger of the damper mechanism to engage the bottom plug. In another embodiment, not covered by the claims, damping control is introduced in both the retraction and the extension direction. In this embodiment, the plunger is attached to the bottom plug. Thus, the plunger adds a damping force on a retraction and extension of the rod member. To change the controlled damping force created during the two opposite movements of the rod, the internal damper piston has at least one check valve. Thus, movement in one direction is dampened to a lesser amount than movement in the other direction. The disclosure reveals there are several embodiments and implementations of the invention. Essentially, a damper mechanism is added to a compression spring rod shown in Adoline (US Pat. No. 6,773,022). This concept allows several versions of a combined reciprocating rod with a damper plunger in a coil spring strut. The configuration of the damper mechanism and its connection with respect to the housing structure allows these several versions of the basic inventive concept.

[0010] The primary object of the present invention is the provision of an elongated strut having a coil spring biasing a rod member in either the retracted or extended position with a damper mechanism forming a part of the movable rod to add a controlled force during at least a portion of the travel of the rod.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is the provision of a strut, as defined above, which strut adds a dampening force during a certain portion of movement of the rod into an elongated compression spring housing. The strut is capable of adding a controlled dampening force to different selected portions of the movement of the main rod of the strut.

[0012] Yet another object of the present invention is the provision of a strut, as defined above, which strut is easily manufactured, more economical and provides more force and motion versatility than existing struts.

[0013] Yet a further object of the present invention is the provision of a strut, as defined above, which strut controls the movement of a hood, door, cover, lid or other pivotal structures so that the movement of the structure has increased force control over a portion of the rod movement in a common coil spring strut.

[0014] These and other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description, taken together with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING

[0015]

5 FIGURE 1 is a pictorial view representing the primary use of the present invention wherein a door, hood, cover or lid is movable from an open position to a closed position against the force generated by one non-limiting embodiment of the present invention;

10 FIGURE 2 is an exploded view of the first embodiment of the present invention wherein the strut is primarily a compression strut;

15 FIGURE 3A is a side elevational view of the strut shown in FIGURE 2 assembled with the strut in the extended rest position;

20 FIGURE 3B is a cross-sectional view, as shown in FIGURE 3A, with the rod partially compressed;

25 FIGURE 3C is a cross-sectional view of the strut, as shown in FIGURES 3A and 3B, with the rod fully compressed into the housing;

30 FIGURE 3D is a cross-sectional view of the strut, as shown in FIGURES 3A, 3B and 3C, as the rod is being extended or returned by assistance of the coil spring;

35 FIGURE 4 is a pictorial view of a shelf movable in a vertical direction under the control of a strut constructed in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

40 FIGURE 5 is an exploded view of the second embodiment not covered by the claims wherein the strut has a damping action in both the extension and the compression directions;

45 FIGURE 6A is a cross-sectional view of the strut shown in FIGURE 5 with the rod in the fully extended position and the coil spring at rest;

50 FIGURE 6B is a cross-sectional view of the strut, as shown in FIGURE 6A, with the rod of the strut partially compressed against the damping action of the damper mechanism;

55 FIGURE 6C is a cross-sectional view of the strut, as shown in FIGURES 6A and 6B, with the rod fully compressed;

FIGURE 6D is a cross-sectional view of the strut, as shown in FIGURES 6A, 6B and 6C, with the rod moving in the extension direction against a controlled higher damper force;

FIGURES 7A, 7B, 7C and 7D are cross-sectional views of a strut similar to the strut shown in FIGURES 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D with the main coil spring moving the rod toward the retracted position; and,

FIGURES 8A and 8B are a strut similar to the strut as shown in FIGURES 7A-7D, with the plunger attached to the bottom plug, as shown in FIGURE 5.

DESCRIPTION OF NON-LIMITING EMBODIMENTS

[0016] The compression spring rod shown in Adoline (US Pat. No. 6,773,002) utilizes an elongated housing with a reciprocal rod movable within the housing. One or more coil springs control the force profile in the compression or retracted direction, in the extended or retraction direction or in both directions. Operation of the coil spring structure in the Adoline patent is determined by the orientation of the control spring or springs. To adjust the spring force profile, two springs are often used and are wrapped in opposite directions, the springs having different modulus of expansion, different lengths or different combinations of such spring parameters. This type of coil spring is employed in an elongated strut to control the force necessary to open or close a pivoted member, such as a door, lid or cover. The present invention is an improvement over this prior coil spring device by adding further force controlling characteristics, for use in either the retracted or compression direction or in the extended, retracted direction. One non-limiting embodiment of the invention relates to an improved motion control strut operated in the compression orientation for controlling the force profile used while closing a lid. Application of such embodiment is schematically shown in FIGURE 1 wherein two spaced struts A are mounted on box B for controlling the closing action of lid, door or cover C. This first non-limiting embodiment of the invention is shown in FIGURES 1, 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D. Strut A has an elongated housing 10 with the length necessary to determine the stroke of the strut. The housing has a first end 12 and a second end 14 defined by the ends of guide tube 20 closed at the first end by guide member 30 in the form of a bushing. This bushing has internal journal passage 32 and is held on the end of housing 10 by the combination of groove 34 in member 30 and crimped rim 36 on the first end of tube 20. To close the opposite end of the tube, bottom plug or bushing 40 is fixed by the interaction of groove 42 in bottom plug or bushing 40 and crimped rim 44 on the second end of the tube. In this manner, member 30 and bottom plug or bushing 40 close the opposite ends of tube 20 defining elongated housing 10 and having inner surface 22 for guiding reciprocal movement of rod member 50 extending through journal passage 32. In accordance with the prior Adoline patent, rod member 50 has an outer end 52 with first external connector 54 connected by threaded bore 54a and stud 54b. Inner end 56 of reciprocal rod member 50 carries guide piston 60 slidable along surface 22 of tube 20 and connected to

the end of rod member 50 by the interaction of groove 64 and crimped rim 66. To mount strut 44 onto the structure as shown in FIGURE 1, there is a second external connector 70 attached to fixed bottom plug or bushing 40 by stud 70b threaded into bore 70a. Since the first embodiment of the invention is a compression controlled strut A the coacting coil spring 80 is positioned between piston 60 and fixed bottom plug or bushing 40. In accordance with known technology, coil spring 80 which controls the compression force profile of rod member 50 often includes two concentric coil springs wrapped in opposite directions and having different lengths, different spring coefficients modulus or combination of these spring parameters to determine and force profile required to close lid C of box B. In operation, connector 54 of rod member 50 is moved to the left as shown in FIGURE 3B when cover C is closed. This collapses coil spring 80, or combines springs as previously discussed, to control the force profile of the closing action for cover C. The present invention relates to an improvement in this type of elongated strut.

[0017] Compression strut A is modified so rod member 50 is combined with a damper mechanism 100 comprising a force controlling passageway 102 filled with an appropriate liquid. Plunger 104 with a piston 110 on the inner end of the plunger is reciprocated in passageway 102. Controlled force is determined by a calibrated orifice 112 in piston 110. Movement of plunger 104 in either direction is dampened by the calibrated orifice 112 so that distal end 114, having tip flange 116 secured to the plunger by stud 116a threaded into bore 116b, exerts a force based upon the interaction of piston 110 in passageway 102. The first embodiment of the invention shown in FIGURE 2 is operated in accordance with the progressive positions of rod member 50 as illustrated in FIGURES 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D. Extension coil spring 120 surrounds plunger 104 and exerts an outer directed force between tip flange 116 and terminal portion 122 of rod member 50. In this first embodiment of the invention, plunger 104 is not connected or fixed to bottom plug or bushing 40 but periodically abuts against or engages bottom plug or bushing 40 for adding the dampening force of mechanism 100 to the coil spring controlled force of strut A. As shown in FIGURE 3A, strut A is in its extended rest position with tip flange 116 extended outwardly from rod 50 but spaced a distance a from fixed bottom plug or bushing 40. As lid or cover C is closed against the force exerted by strut A, initial movement of rod member 50 is against the force of coil spring 80 until rod member 50 moves the distance a. At that time, tip flange 160 engages bottom plug or bushing 40 to add the damping effect of piston 110 to the force profile experienced by downwardly moving cover C. This addition or combination of the coil spring force and the added damper force is continued until rod member 50 is fully compressed, as shown in FIGURES 3B and 3C. Consequently, the force of the coil spring or springs in tube 20 is added to the damping of mechanism 100. To extend rod member 50, tip flange

116 is immediately withdrawn from bottom plug or bushing 40 so damper mechanism 100 has no effect in the retraction direction. During the retraction action as shown in FIGURE 3D, extension coil spring 120 acting against end 122 of rod member 50 shifts plunger 104 to the fully retracted position by moving piston 110 in passageway 102. This action has no effect upon the extension movement of rod member 50, but merely prepares the damper mechanism by shifting the plunger to the position shown in FIGURE 3A. Thereafter, strut A is conditioned for movement again between the positions shown in FIGURES 3A, 3B and 3C. In this manner, the compression of strut A is controlled first by the coil spring and then by a combination of the coil spring and novel damping mechanism 100, with the damping effect controlled by calibrated orifice 112.

[0018] As shown in FIGURES 4 and 5 a second embodiment operated in accordance with the positional views shown in FIGURES 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D. Struts A' are mounted between the top of legs L and movable shelf S to control the movement of shelf S as illustrated in FIGURE 4. Strut A' is constructed to exert a damping control force in both movement directions of rod member 50. Many components used in first embodiment strut A are the same as components illustrated for use in the second embodiment strut A'. This particular strut is modified by attaching distal end 114 of plunger 104 onto bottom plug or bushing 40 by an attachment 200 in the form of stud 200a threaded into bore 200b. By using this second embodiment, damper mechanism 100 operates in both the extended direction of rod member 50 and the retracted direction of rod member 50. As shown in FIGURE 6A, coil spring 80 is expanded to its rest position in housing 10, which extended position involves a small space between piston 60 and guide member or bushing 30. In the position shown in FIGURE 6A, shelf S has been lowered and the movement has been controlled by the force of coil spring 80 as restricted by the damping force of damper mechanism 100. To retract the shelf, rod member 50 is moved to the right as shown in FIGURE 6B to compress coil spring 80 against the resistance of force caused by the spring. At the same time, damper mechanism 100 controls the spring compression direction of rod member 50. Piston 110 moves in passageway 102 to add controlled force. In one implementation of this embodiment, calibrated orifice 122 controls movement of piston 110 in both directions. However, in the illustrated embodiment, one way valve 210 allows easier movement of the rod member as it is retracted. Retraction against coil spring 180 continues as shown in FIGURE 6C where spring 80 is fully compressed and plunger 104 is moved into passageway 102 in a controlled damping action. Since one way valve 210 is opened in this direction, the damping force applied in compression is less than the damping force added to the spring force in extension as illustrated in FIGURE 6D. During such extension, valve 210 is closed and the movement of piston 110 in force controlling passageway 102 is determined by the action

of calibrated orifice 122. By attaching distal end 114 of plunger 104 onto bottom plug or bushing 40, the damper mechanism operates in both directions.

[0019] As illustrated in FIGURES 6A-6D, strut A' adds a controlling damper force during movement of rod member 50 in both directions. The amount of damping force changes with velocity and can be varied in the opposite directions, if desired. This action is different from strut A shown in FIGURE 2 where the added damping force occurs only during compression of the strut. Strut A is modified to produce a retraction controlled strut 250 as shown in FIGURES 7A-7D. In this embodiment of the invention, compression spring 80 is replaced by compression spring 260 located between guide member or bushing 30 and piston 60 riding along surface 22 of tube 20. End flange 116 periodically abuts against bottom plug or bushing 40, as in strut A. This causes controlled retraction, as illustrated. In FIGURE 7A, strut 250 is at rest with rod member 50 retracted into housing 10 and plunger 104 collapsed into passageway 102. During extension, as illustrated in FIGURE 7B, rod member 50 is moved outwardly against compression spring 260. Damper mechanism 110 has no effect and spring 120 merely moves plunger 104 to the right cocking it for the next retraction of strut 250. The fully extended position of rod member 50 is illustrated in FIGURE 7C. This position has been reached by movement against the compressive force of coil spring 260 which, as in other embodiments, may be two oppositely wound coil springs with different lengths, different spring modulus or a combination of these parameters. After strut 250 is fully extended as shown in FIGURE 7C, it is retracted as shown in FIGURE 7D until it reaches the position shown in FIGURE 7A. This retraction is controlled by the relaxation of coil spring 260 at a controlled rate together with a controlled movement of plunger 104 into passageway 102. A single calibrated orifice 122 controls the movement of piston 110 in both directions. This damper force acts against the spring expansion force of coil 260, only when the coil is being retracted as shown in FIGURE 7D.

[0020] The damping force and spring force are combined during movement of rod member in both directions when coil spring 250 is between guide journal 30 and piston 60. When the rod member is moved in the retracted direction and, distal end 114 is connected to bottom plug or bushing 40 by attachment arrangement 200. The spring acts against the damper force when rod member 50 is retracted or extended. This modification of strut A' of FIGURE 7 is schematically illustrated in FIGURES 8A-8D. In this embodiment, piston 110 includes a one way valve 210 so that there is a substantial damping force exerted during the retraction of rod member 50 as shown in FIGURE 8D. Movement of the rod in the opposite direction as shown in FIGURE 8B has a lesser amount of damping force applied against movement of spring 260.

[0021] All embodiments of the invention combines a damper force to a coil spring operated strut so that a damping force is applied to movement of the strut in one

or more directions. Several embodiments and implementations of this invention are illustrated; however, a person skilled in the art could devise other uses of a center damper mechanism to add a damping force in one or both directions of a coil spring controlled strut.

Claims

1. A force control strut (A) comprising an elongated housing (10) having an axis and axially opposite first and second ends (12, 14) and an internal chamber with an inner surface (22), a rod member (50) coaxial with said axis and having an inner end (56) reciprocally movable inside said housing (10) and along said internal chamber and an outer end (52) extending outwardly of said first end (12) of said housing (10), a guide member (30) secured at or near said first end (12) of said housing (10) to allow reciprocation of said rod member (50) axially in said housing (10) between a retracted position and an extended position relative to said housing (10), a bottom plug (40) fixed at least partially in said internal chamber at or near said second end (14) of said housing (10), a guide piston (60) secured at or near said inner end (56) of said rod member (50) and slideable along said inner surface (22) of said internal chamber, a first coil spring system (80) positioned i) between said guide piston (60) and said bottom plug (40) to bias said single rod member (50) in said extended position in said single elongated housing (10) or ii) between said guide piston (60) and said guide member (30) to bias said single rod member (50) in said retracted position in said single elongated housing (10), a first external connector (54) fixed at or near said outer end (52) of said rod member (50), a second connector (70) fixed at or near said bottom plug (40), **characterised by** a damper (100) combined with said rod member (50), said damper (100) including a plunger (104) having first and second ends (114) and a plunger piston (110), said plunger piston (110) and said first end of said plunger (104) reciprocally mounted in an elongated force controlling passageway (102) inside said rod member (50) and coaxial with said rod member (50), said plunger piston (110) movable in said passageway (102) of said rod member (50) between a compressed and uncompressed position, said second end (114) of said plunger (104) engageable with said bottom plug (40) to force said plunger piston (110) to move in said passageway (102) toward said compressed position to at least partially dampen movement of said rod member (50) in said housing (10) as said rod member (50) moves toward said bottom plug (40), said plunger (104) including a plunger biasing arrangement with a plunger coil spring (120) to bias said plunger (104) in said uncompressed position, said coil spring (120) positioned at least partially between said inner end (56) of rod member (50) and said bottom plug (40), further including a tip flange (116) on said distal end (114) of said plunger (104), the coil spring (120) around said plunger (104) and engaging said tip flange (116) to bias said plunger (104) outwardly.
2. The force control strut as defined in claim 1, comprising only single elongated housing (10) and a single rod member (50) coaxial with said axis of said single elongated housing (10).
3. The force control strut as defined in claim 1 or 2, wherein said guide piston (60) dividing said internal chamber (10) into top and bottom internal chamber portions, said top internal chamber absent a coil spring system.
4. The force control strut as defined in any one of claims 1-3, wherein said plunger piston (110) includes an orifice system (112, 210) to allow fluid flow in at least one direction through said orifice system, said plunger piston (110) movable in said force controlling passageway inside said rod member (50).
5. The strut as defined in claim 4, wherein said orifice system (112, 210) includes a passageway (112), a valve (210), or combinations thereof, said plunger piston allowing fluid to flow at a different rate through said plunger piston (110) when said plunger piston (110) moves to said compressed position than when said plunger piston (110) moves to said uncompressed position,
6. The force control strut as defined in claim 5, wherein said orifice system (112, 210) includes a valve.
7. The force control strut as defined in claim 5 or 6, wherein said orifice system in said plunger piston (110) includes first and second orifices (112, 210), said first and second orifices (112, 210) allow fluid flow in at least one direction through said orifices (112, 210) when said plunger piston (110) moves in said elongated force controlling passageway inside said rod member (50), said first orifice (112) allowing fluid flow at a different rate than a rate of fluid flow through said second orifice (210) when said plunger piston (110) moves to said compressed position, when said plunger piston (110) moves to said uncompressed position, or combinations thereof.
8. The force control strut as defined in claim 7, wherein said first orifice includes a valve (210) and said second orifice (112) does not include a valve.
9. The strut as defined in any one of claims 1-8, wherein said plunger (104) is designed to periodically abut against said bottom plug (40) as said guide piston

(60) compresses said first coil spring while moving toward said bottom plug (40), said plunger (104) not connected to said bottom plug (40).

10. The strut as defined in any one of claims 1-9, wherein said plunger (104) is spaced from said bottom plug (40) when said rod member (50) is in a fully extended position. 5
11. The force control strut as defined in any one of claims 1-10, wherein said elongated force controlling passageway inside said rod member (50) absent a mechanical spring acting on said plunger piston. 10
12. The force control strut as defined in any one of claims 1-11, wherein said first coil spring system is formed of a first coil spring and a second coil spring, said second coil spring having a different coefficient of compression than said first coil spring, said second coil spring wrapped in a direction opposite to said first coil spring, or combinations thereof. 15 20

Patentansprüche

1. Kraftsteuerungsstab (A), der ein längliches Gehäuse (10), das eine Achse und ein erstes und ein in Axialrichtung gegenüberliegendes zweites Ende (12, 14) und eine innere Kammer mit einer Innenfläche (22) hat, ein Stangenelement (50), das koaxial mit der Achse ist und ein inneres Ende (56), das wechselseitig innerhalb des Gehäuses (10) und entlang der inneren Kammer bewegt werden kann, und ein äußeres Ende (52), das sich von dem ersten Ende (12) des Gehäuses (10) aus nach außen erstreckt, hat, ein Führungselement (30), das an oder nahe dem ersten Ende (12) des Gehäuses (10) befestigt ist, um eine Hin- und Herbewegung des Stangenelements (50) in Axialrichtung in dem Gehäuse (10) zwischen einer eingezogenen Stellung und einer ausgefahrenen Stellung im Verhältnis zu dem Gehäuse (10) zu ermöglichen, einen unteren Stopfen (40), der wenigstens teilweise in der inneren Kammer an oder nahe dem zweiten Ende (14) des Gehäuses (10) befestigt ist, einen Führungskolben (60), der an oder nahe dem inneren Ende (56) des Stangenelements (50) befestigt und entlang der Innenfläche (22) der inneren Kammer verschiebbar ist, ein erstes Schraubenfedersystem (80), das angeordnet ist I) zwischen dem Führungskolben (60) und dem unteren Stopfen (40), um das einzelne Stangenelement (50) in der ausgefahrenen Stellung in dem einzelnen länglichen Gehäuse (10) vorzuspannen, oder II) zwischen dem Führungskolben (60) und dem Führungselement (30), um das einzelne Stangenelement (50) in der eingezogenen Stellung in dem einzelnen länglichen Gehäuse (10) vorzuspannen, einen ersten äußeren Verbinder (54), der an 25 30 35 40 45 50 55

oder nahe dem äußeren Ende (52) des Stangenelements (50) befestigt ist, einen zweiten Verbinder (70), der an oder nahe dem unteren Stopfen (40) angebracht ist, umfasst, **gekennzeichnet durch** einen Dämpfer (100), der mit dem Stangenelement (50) kombiniert ist, wobei der Dämpfer (100) einen Plunger (104), der ein erstes und ein zweites Ende (114) hat, und einen Plungerkolben (110) einschließt, wobei der Plungerkolben (110) und das erste Ende des Plungers (104) wechselseitig in einem länglichen Kraftsteuerungsdurchgang (102) innerhalb des Stangenelements (50) und koaxial mit dem Stangenelement (50) angebracht sind, wobei der Plungerkolben (110) in dem Durchgang (102) des Stangenelements (50) bewegt werden kann zwischen einer zusammengedrückten und einer nicht zusammengedrückten Stellung, wobei das zweite Ende (114) des Plungers (104) mit dem unteren Stopfen (40) in Eingriff gebracht werden kann, um den Plungerkolben (110) zu zwingen sich in dem Durchgang (102) zu der zusammengedrückten Stellung hin zu bewegen, um wenigstens teilweise eine Bewegung des Stangenelements (50) in dem Gehäuse (10) zu dämpfen, wenn sich das Stangenelement (50) zu dem unteren Stopfen (40) hin bewegt, wobei der Plunger (104) eine Plunger-Vorspannanordnung mit einer Plunger-Schraubenfeder (120) zum Vorspannen des Plungers (104) in der nicht zusammengedrückten Stellung einschließt, wobei die Schraubenfeder (120) wenigstens teilweise zwischen dem inneren Ende (56) des Stangenelements (50) und dem unteren Stopfen (40) angeordnet ist, ferner einschließend einen Spitzenflansch (116) an dem distalen Ende (114) des Plungers (104), wobei die Schraubenfeder (120) um den Plunger (104) angeordnet ist und den Spitzenflansch (116) in Eingriff nimmt, um den Plunger (104) nach außen vorzuspannen.

2. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach Anspruch 1, der nur ein einzelnes längliches Gehäuse (10) und ein einzelnes Stangenelement (50), koaxial mit der Achse des einzelnen länglichen Gehäuses (10), umfasst. 25
3. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei der Führungskolben (60) die innere Kammer (10) in einen oberen und einen unteren inneren Kammerabschnitt teilt, wobei der obere inneren Kammer ein Schraubenfedersystem fehlt. 30 35 40 45 50 55
4. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, wobei der Plungerkolben (110) ein Öffnungssystem (112, 210) einschließt, um einen Fluidstrom in wenigstens einer Richtung durch das Öffnungssystem zu ermöglichen, wobei der Plungerkolben (110) in dem Kraftsteuerungsdurchgang innerhalb des Stangenelements (50) bewegt werden kann.

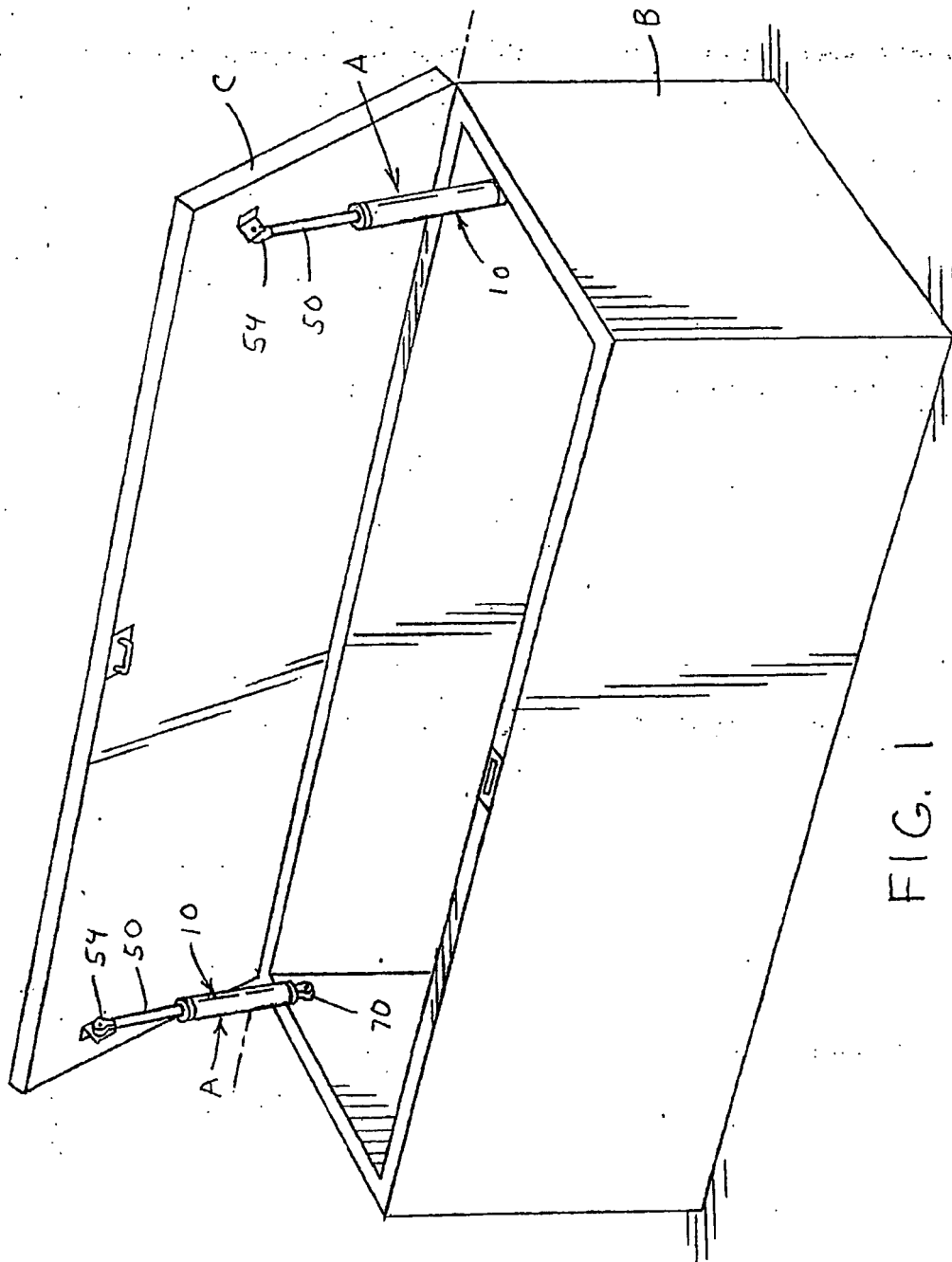
5. Stab nach Anspruch 4, wobei das Öffnungssystem (112, 210) einen Durchgang (112), ein Ventil (210) oder Kombinationen derselben einschließt, wobei der Plungerkolben (110) ermöglicht dass Fluid mit einer anderen Rate durch den Plungerkolben (110) strömt, wenn sich der Plungerkolben (110) zu der zusammengedrückten Stellung bewegt als wenn sich der Plungerkolben (110) zu der nicht zusammengedrückten Stellung bewegt. 5
6. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach Anspruch 5, wobei das Öffnungssystem (112, 210) ein Ventil einschließt. 10
7. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach Anspruch 5 oder 6, wobei das Öffnungssystem in dem Plungerkolben (110) eine erste und eine zweite Öffnung (112, 210) einschließt, wobei die erste und die zweite Öffnung (112, 210) einen Fluidstrom in wenigstens einer Richtung durch die Öffnungen (112, 210) ermöglichen, wenn sich der Plungerkolben (110) in dem länglichen Kraftsteuerungsdurchgang innerhalb des Stangenelements (50) bewegt, wobei die erste Öffnung (112) einen Fluidstrom mit einer anderen Rate ermöglicht als eine Rate des Fluidstroms durch die zweite Öffnung (210), wenn sich der Plungerkolben (110) zu der zusammengedrückten Stellung bewegt, wenn sich der Plungerkolben (110) zu der nicht zusammengedrückten Stellung bewegt, oder Kombinationen derselben. 15 20 25 30
8. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach Anspruch 7, wobei die erste Öffnung ein Ventil (210) einschließt und die zweite Öffnung (112) kein Ventil einschließt. 35
9. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 8, wobei der Plunger (104) dafür ausgelegt ist, periodisch an den unteren Stopfen (40) anzustoßen, wenn der Führungskolben (60) die erste Schraubenfeder zusammendrückt, während er sich zu dem unteren Stopfen (40) hin bewegt, wobei der Plunger (104) nicht mit dem unteren Stopfen (40) verbunden ist. 40
10. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 9, wobei der Plunger (104) mit Abstand von dem unteren Stopfen (40) angeordnet ist wenn sich das Stangenelement (50) in einer vollständig ausgefahrenen Stellung befindet. 45
11. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 10, wobei dem länglichen Kraftsteuerungsdurchgang innerhalb des Stangenelements (50) eine mechanische Feder fehlt, die auf den Plungerkolben einwirkt. 50
12. Kraftsteuerungsstab nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 11, wobei das erste Schraubenfedersystem von einer ersten Schraubenfeder und einer zweiten 55

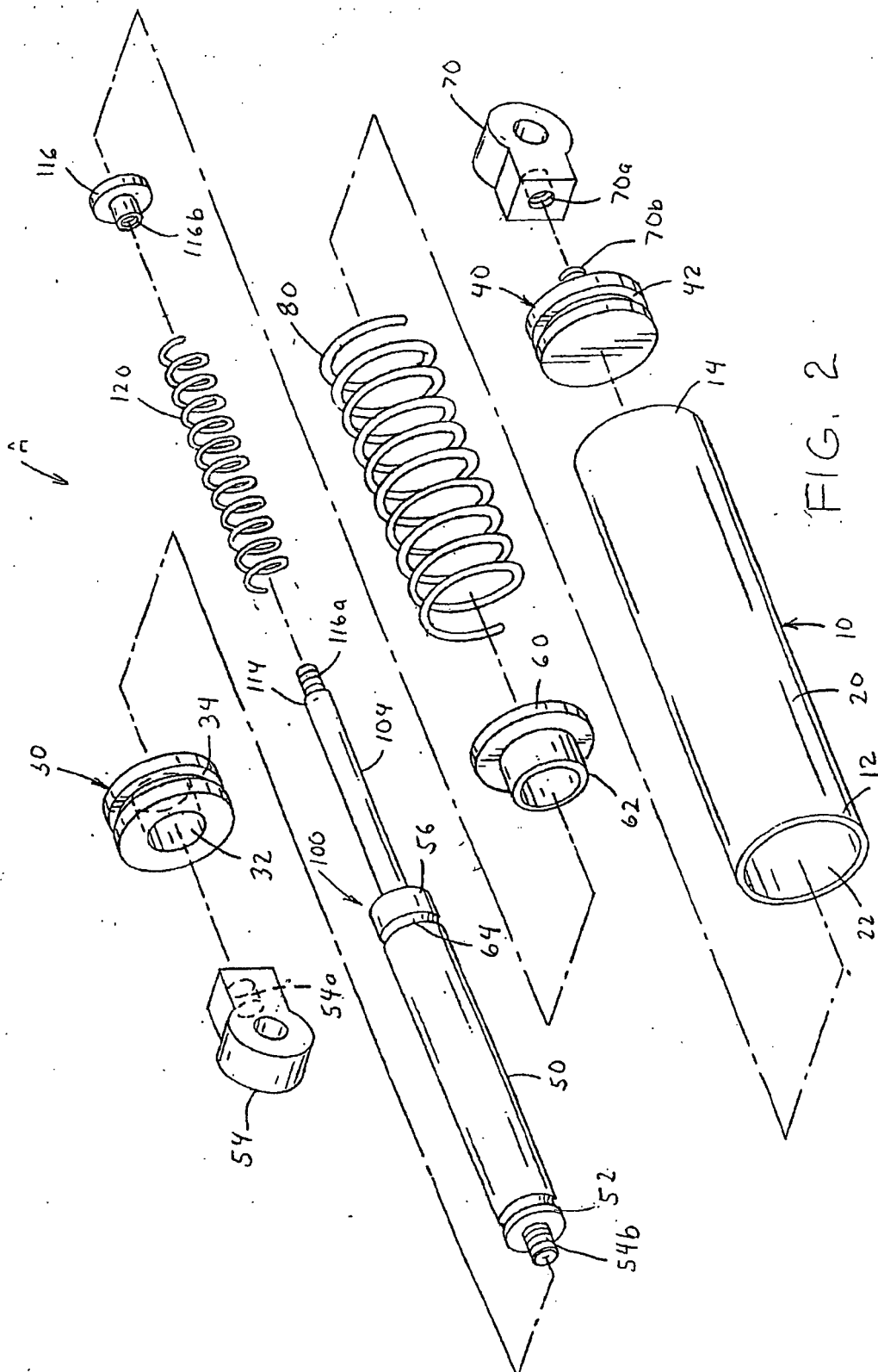
Schraubenfeder gebildet wird, wobei die zweite Schraubenfeder einen anderen Kompressionskoeffizienten hat als die erste Schraubenfeder, die zweite Schraubenfeder in einer Richtung, entgegengesetzt zu der ersten Schraubenfeder gewickelt ist oder Kombinationen derselben.

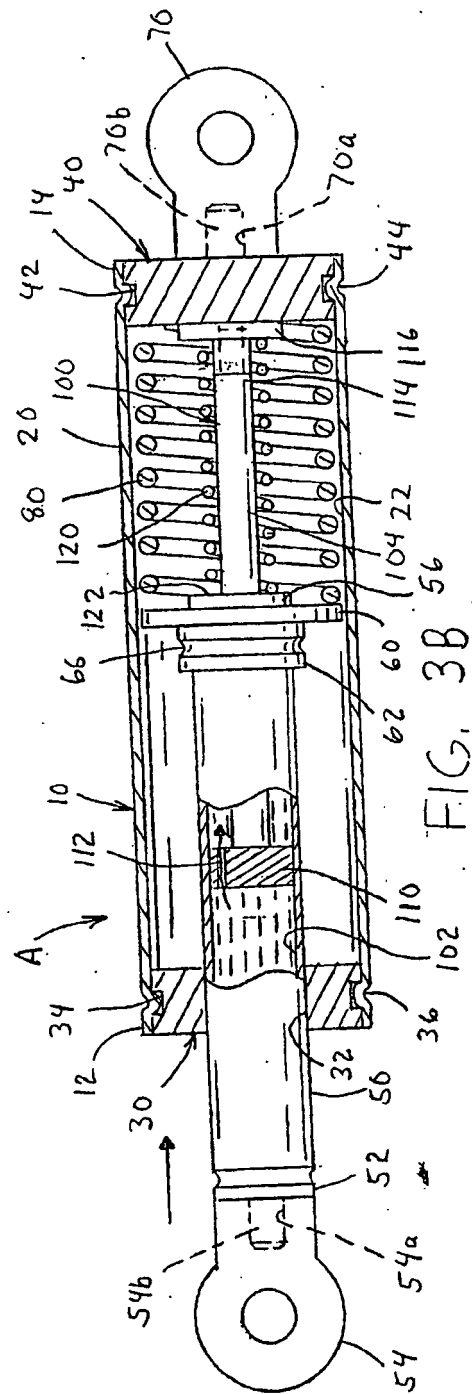
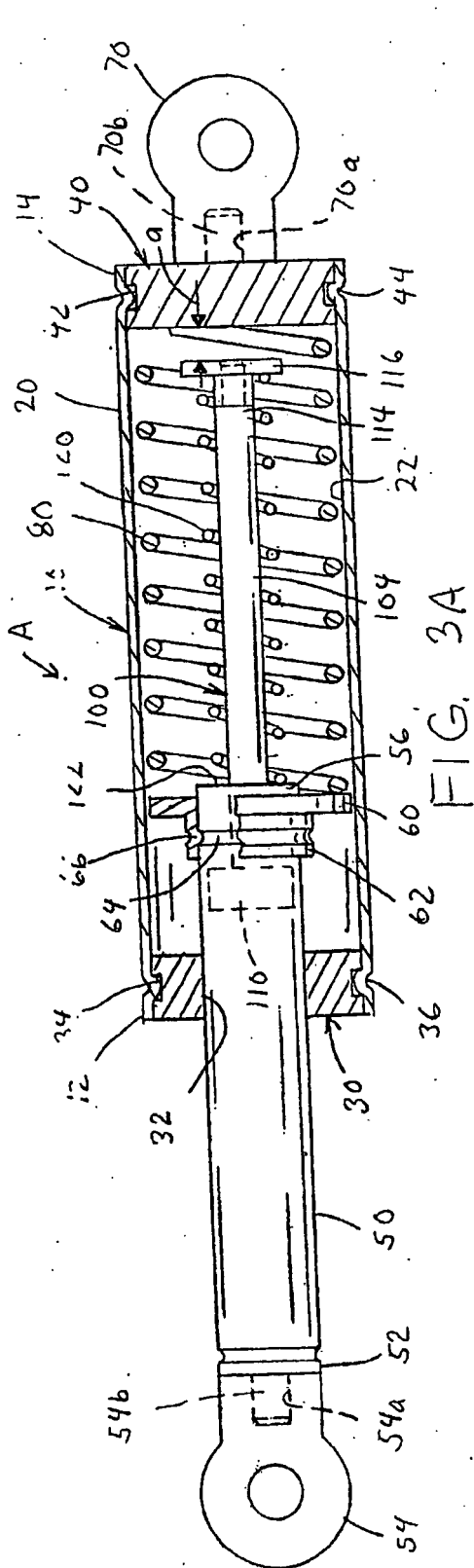
Revendications

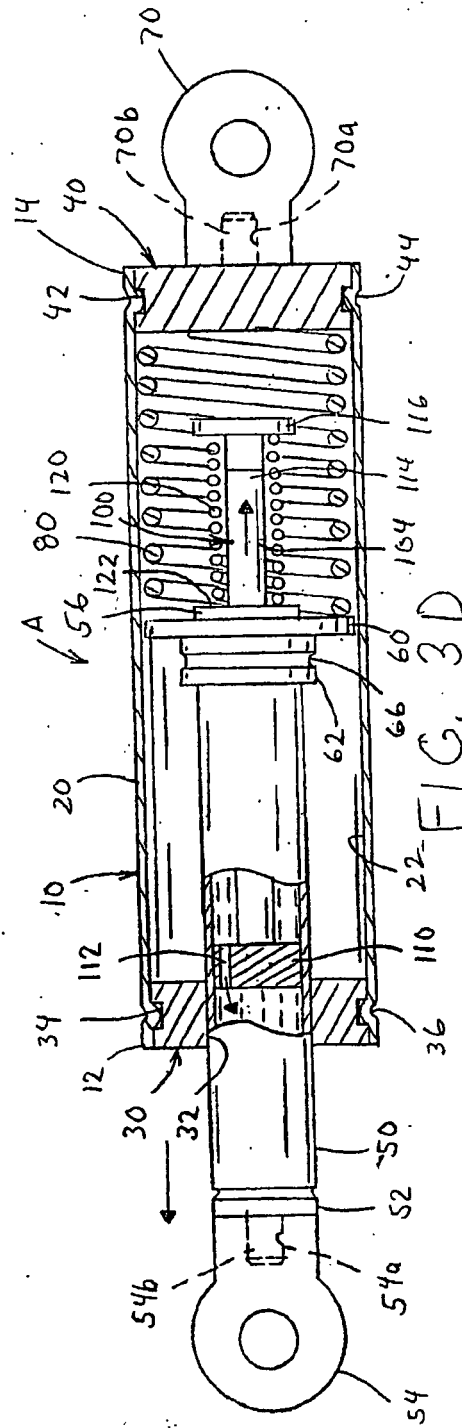
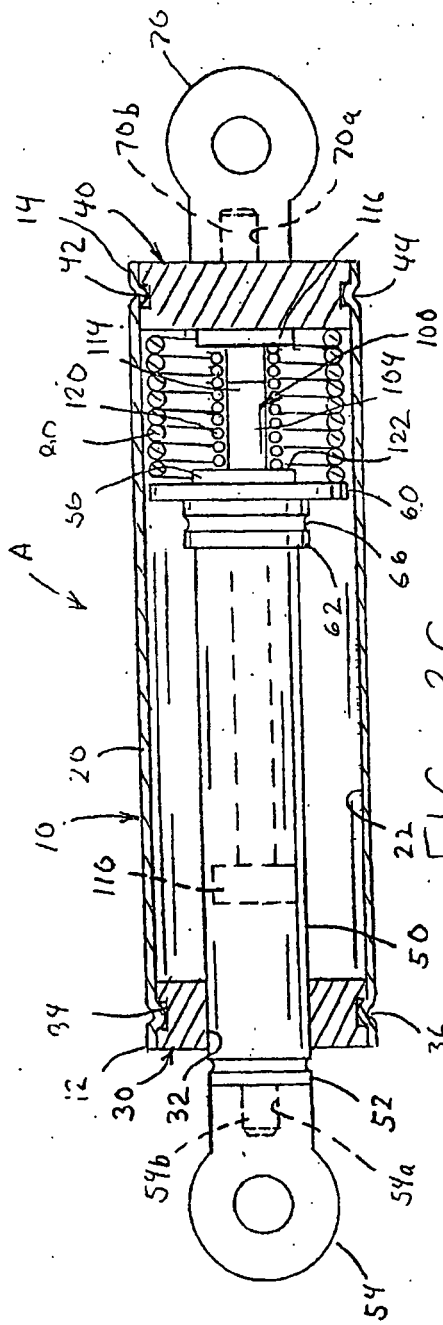
1. Support de contrôle de force (A) comprenant un logement allongé (10) ayant un axe et une première et seconde extrémité (12,14) axialement opposées et une chambre interne avec une surface interne (22), un élément de tige (50) coaxiale audit axe et ayant une extrémité interne (56), déplaçable réciproquement à l'intérieur dudit logement (10) et le long de ladite chambre interne et une extrémité externe (52) s'étendant vers l'extérieur de ladite première extrémité (12) dudit logement (10), un élément de guidage (30) fixé à ou près de ladite première extrémité (12) dudit logement (10) pour permettre la réciprocité dudit élément de tige (60) axialement dans ledit logement (10) entre une position rétractée et une position étendue relativement audit logement (10), un bouchon de fond (40) fixé au moins partiellement dans ladite chambre interne à ou près de ladite seconde extrémité (14) dudit logement (10), un piston de guidage (60) fixé à ou près de ladite extrémité interne (56) dudit élément de tige (50) et coulissant le long de ladite surface interne (22) de ladite chambre interne, un premier système de ressort à boudin (80) positionné i) entre ledit piston de guidage (60) et ledit bouchon de fond (40) pour polariser ledit élément de tige individuel (50) dans ladite position étendue dans ledit logement allongé individuel (10) ou ii) entre ledit piston de guidage (60) et ledit élément de guidage (30) pour polariser ledit élément de tige individuel (50) dans ladite position rétractée dans ledit logement allongé individuel (10), un premier connecteur externe (54) fixé à ou près de ladite extrémité extérieure (52) dudit élément de tige (50), un second connecteur (70) fixé à ou près dudit bouchon de fond (40), **caractérisé par** un amortisseur (100) combiné audit élément de tige (60), ledit amortisseur (100) incluant un plongeur (104) ayant une première et seconde extrémité (114) et un piston plongeur (110), ledit piston plongeur (110) et ladite première extrémité dudit plongeur (104) étant montés réciproquement dans un passage de contrôle de force allongé (102) à l'intérieur dudit élément de tige (50) et coaxial audit élément de tige (50), ledit piston plongeur (110) étant déplaçable dans ledit passage (102) dudit élément de tige (50) entre une position comprimée et non comprimée, ladite seconde extrémité (114) dudit plongeur (104) venant en prise avec ledit bouchon de fond (40) pour forcer ledit piston plongeur (110) à se dé-

- placer dans ledit passage (102) vers ladite position comprimée afin d'amortir au moins partiellement le mouvement dudit élément de tige (50) dans ledit logement (10) lorsque ledit élément de tige (50) se déplace vers ledit bouchon de fond (40), ledit plongeur (104) incluant un dispositif de polarisation de plongeur avec un ressort à boudin de plongeur (120) pour polariser ledit plongeur (104) dans ladite position non comprimée, ledit ressort à boudin (120) étant positionné au moins partiellement entre ladite extrémité interne (56) de l'élément de tige (50) et ledit bouchon de fond (40), incluant en outre une bride à pointe (116) sur ladite extrémité distale (114) dudit plongeur (104), le ressort à boudin (120) s'enroulant autour dudit plongeur (104) et venant en prise avec ladite bride à pointe (116) pour polariser ledit plongeur (104) vers l'extérieur.
2. Support de contrôle de force selon la revendication 1, comprenant seulement un logement allongé individuel (10) et un élément de tige individuel (60) coaxial audit axe dudit logement allongé individuel (10).
 3. Support de contrôle de force selon les revendications 1 ou 2, dans lequel ledit piston de guidage (60) divisant ladite chambre interne (10) en des portions de chambre interne de sommet et de base, ladite chambre interne de sommet renfermant un système de ressort à boudin.
 4. Support de contrôle de force selon une quelconque des revendications 1-3, dans lequel ledit piston plongeur (110) inclut un système d'orifice (112,210) pour permettre l'écoulement d'un fluide dans au moins une direction à travers ledit système d'origine, ledit piston plongeur (110) étant déplaçable dans ledit passage de contrôle de force à l'intérieur dudit élément de tige (50).
 5. Support selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ledit système d'orifice (112,210) inclut un passage (112), une soupape (210) ou des combinaisons de ceux-ci, ledit piston plongeur permettant l'écoulement d'un fluide à un débit différent à travers ledit piston plongeur (110) quand ledit piston plongeur (110) se déplace en ladite position comprimée puis quand ledit piston plongeur (110) se déplace à ladite position non comprimée.
 6. Support de contrôle de force selon la revendication 5, dans lequel ledit système d'orifice (112,210) inclut une soupape.
 7. Support de contrôle de force selon les revendications 5 ou 6, dans lequel ledit système d'origine dans ledit piston plongeur (110) inclut un premier et un second orifice (112,210), ledit premier et second ori-
- fice (112,210) permettant l'écoulement d'un fluide dans au moins une direction à travers lesdits orifices (112,210) quand ledit piston plongeur (110) se déplace dans ledit passage de contrôle de force allongé à l'intérieur dudit élément de tige (50), ledit premier orifice (112) permettant l'écoulement d'un fluide à un débit différent qu'un débit d'écoulement de fluide à travers ledit second orifice (210) quand ledit piston plongeur (110) se déplace en ladite position comprimée quand ledit piston plongeur (110) se déplace en ladite position non comprimée, ou des combinaisons de ceux-ci.
8. Support de contrôle de force selon la revendication 7, dans lequel ledit premier orifice inclut une soupape (210) et ledit second orifice (112) n'inclut pas une soupape.
 9. Support selon une quelconque des revendications 1-8, dans lequel ledit plongeur (104) est conçu afin de buter périodiquement contre ledit bouchon de fond (40) lorsque ledit piston de guidage (60) comprime ledit premier ressort à boudin tout en se déplaçant vers ledit bouchon de fond (40), ledit plongeur (104) n'étant pas raccordé audit bouchon de fond (40).
 10. Support selon une quelconque des revendications 1-9, dans lequel ledit plongeur (104) est espacé dudit bouchon de fond (40) quand ledit élément de tige (50) se trouve dans une position complètement étendue.
 11. Support de contrôle de force selon une quelconque des revendications 1-10, dans lequel ledit passage de contrôle de force allongé à l'intérieur dudit élément de tige (50) renferme un ressort mécanique agissant sur ledit piston plongeur.
 12. Support de contrôle de force selon une quelconque des revendications 1-11, dans lequel ledit premier système de ressort à boudin est formé par un premier ressort à boudin et un second ressort à boudin, ledit second ressort à boudin ayant un coefficient de compression différent dudit premier ressort à boudin, ledit second ressort à boudin étant enroulé dans une direction opposée audit premier ressort à boudin, ou des combinaisons de ceux-ci.









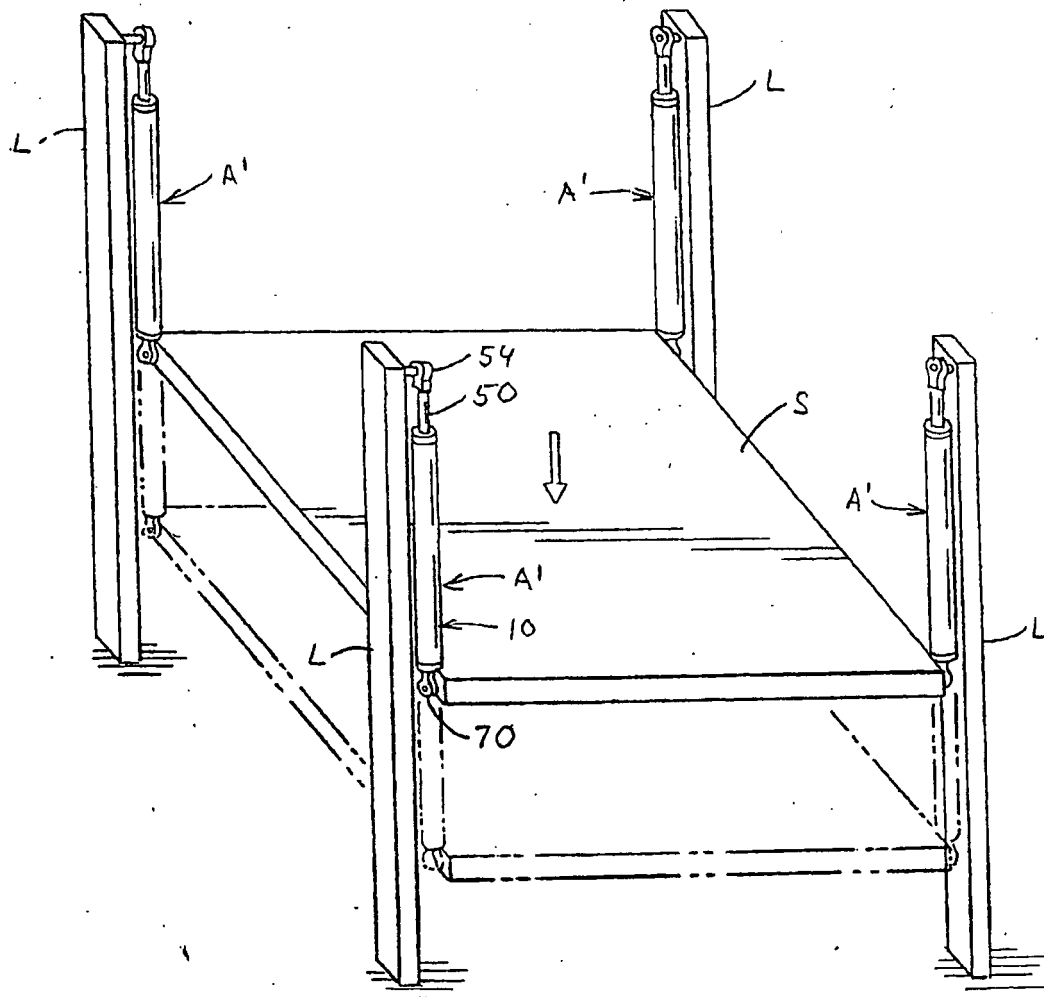


FIG. 4

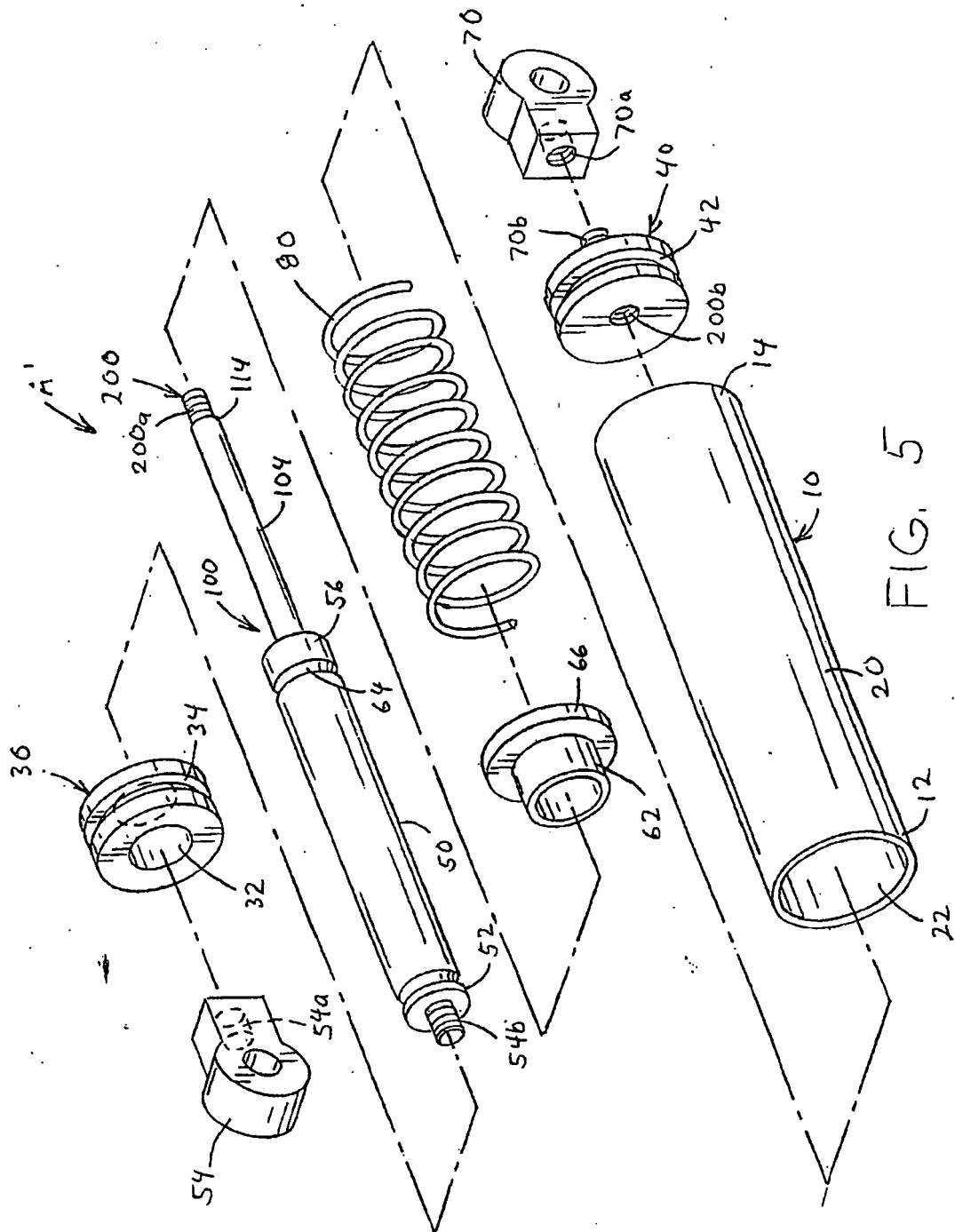
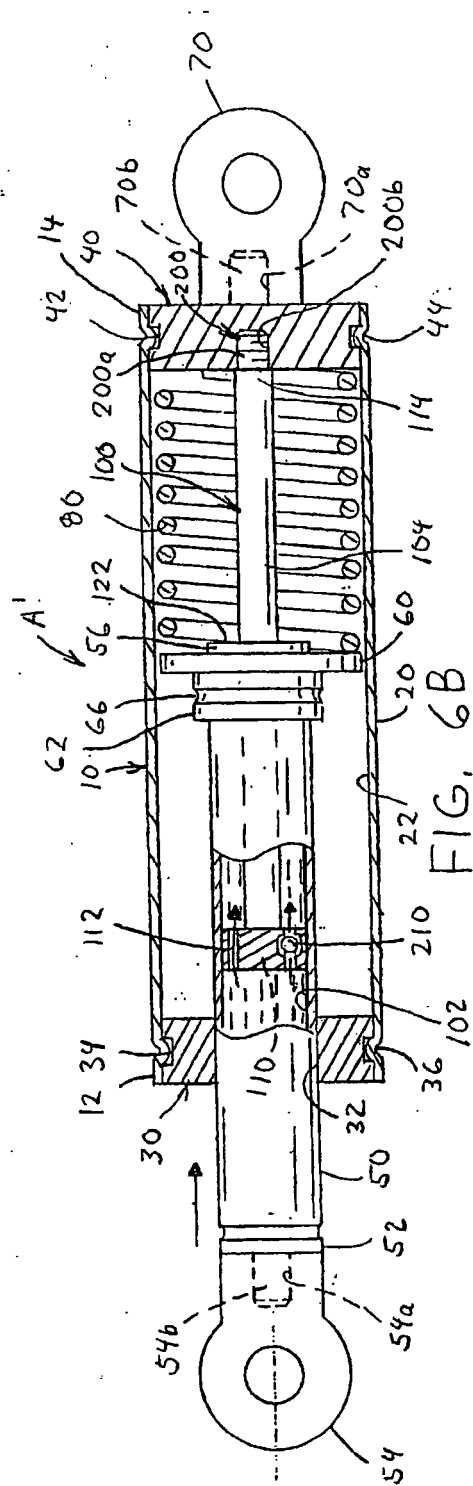
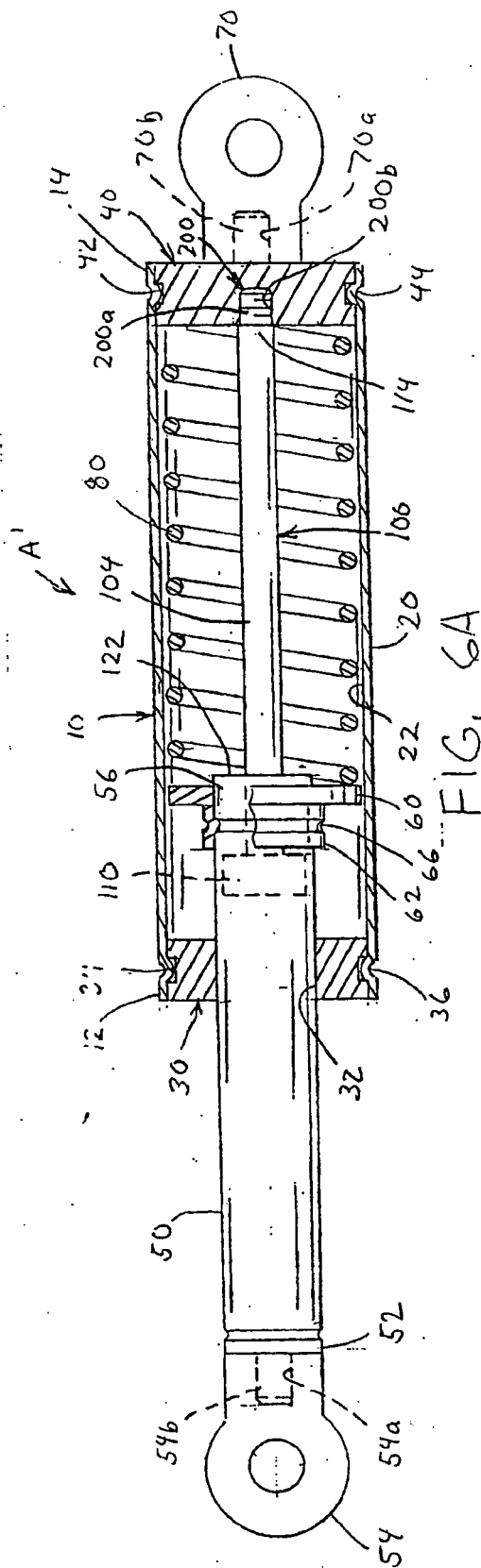
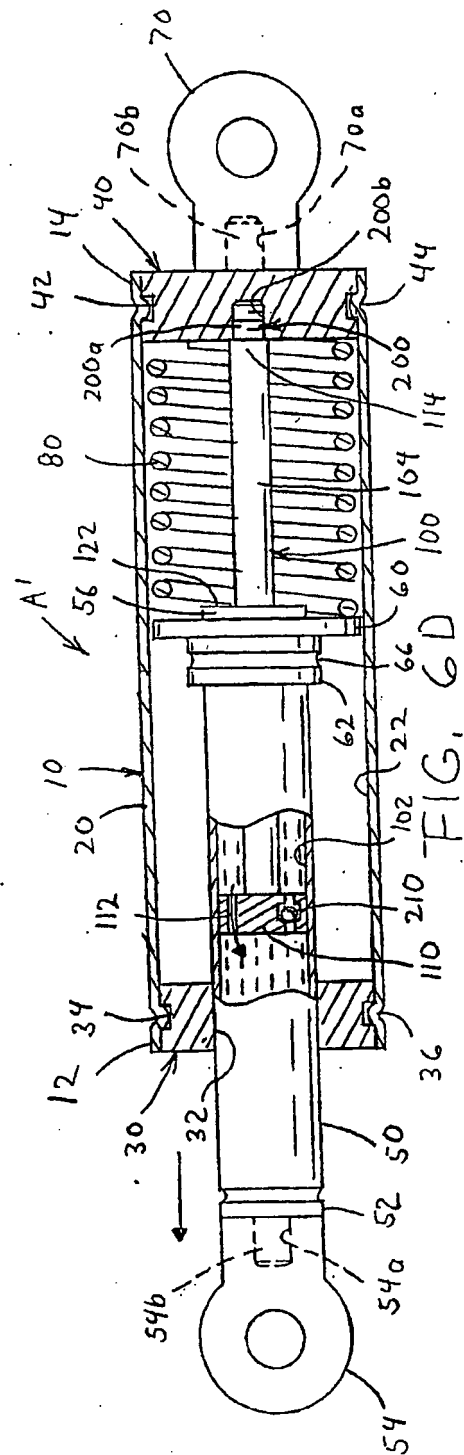
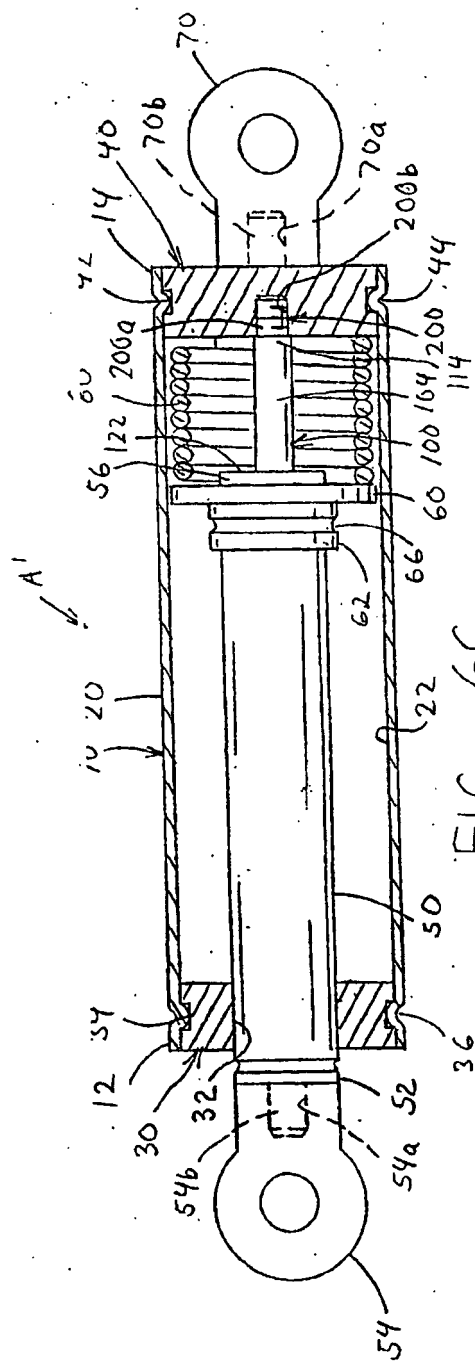
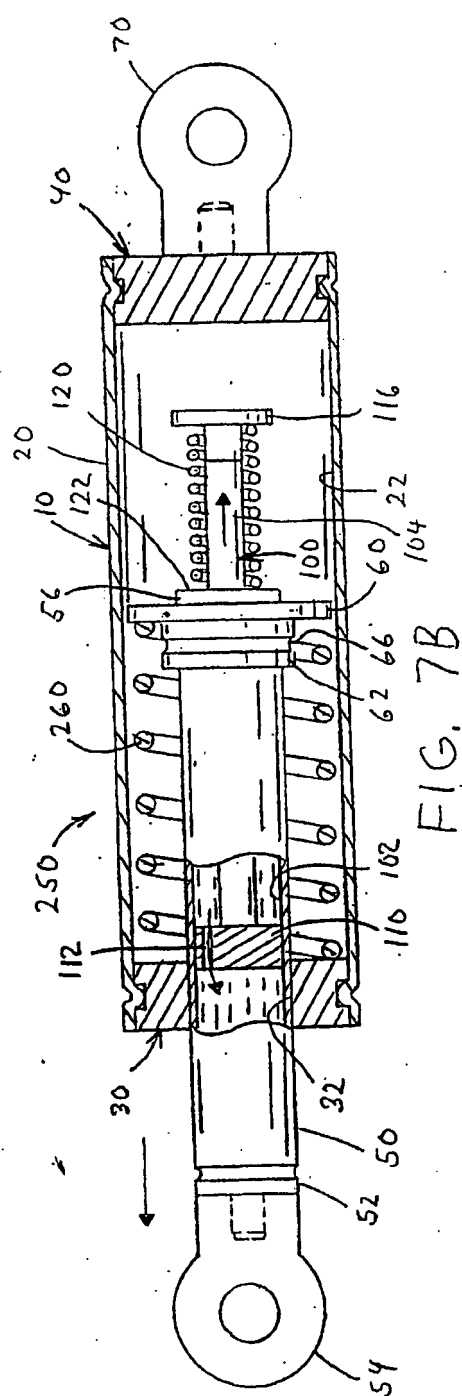
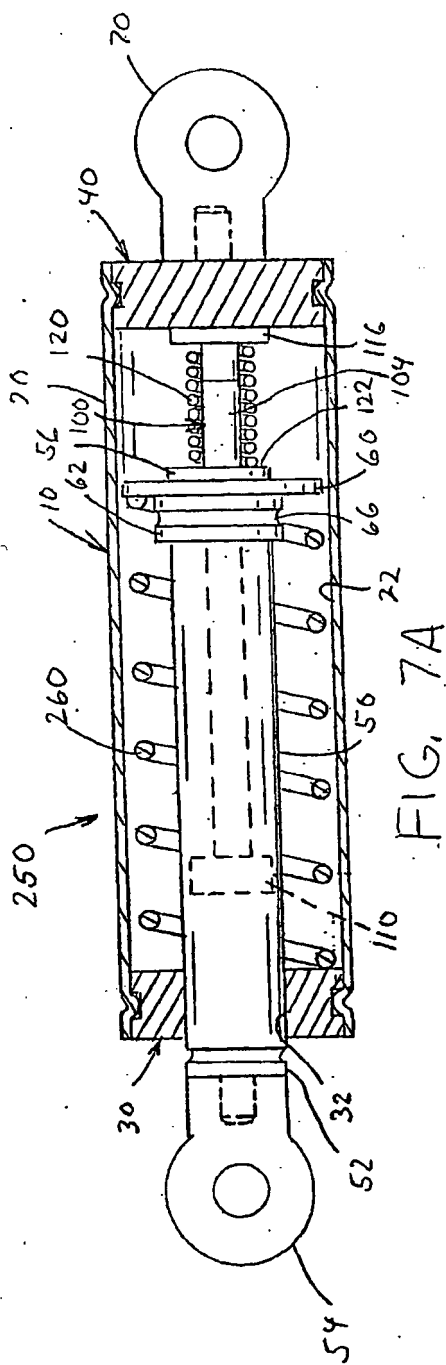
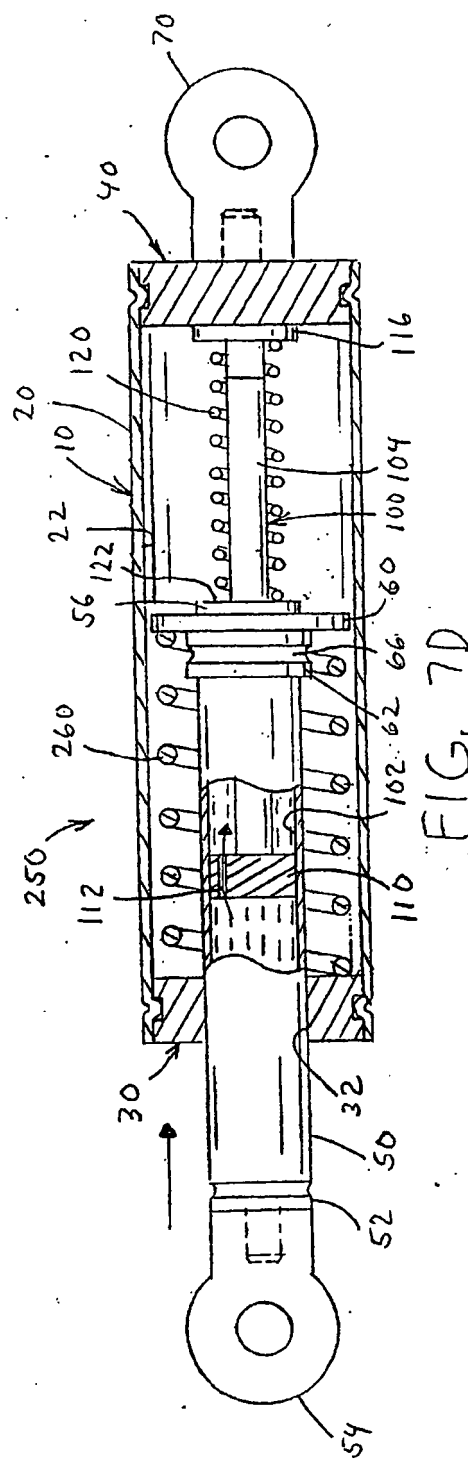
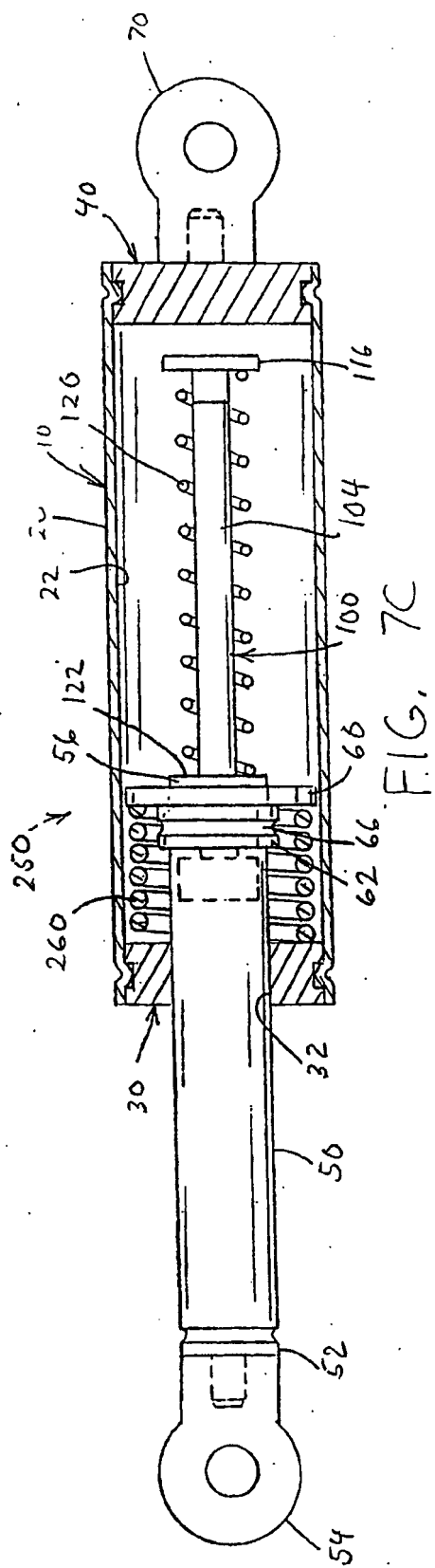


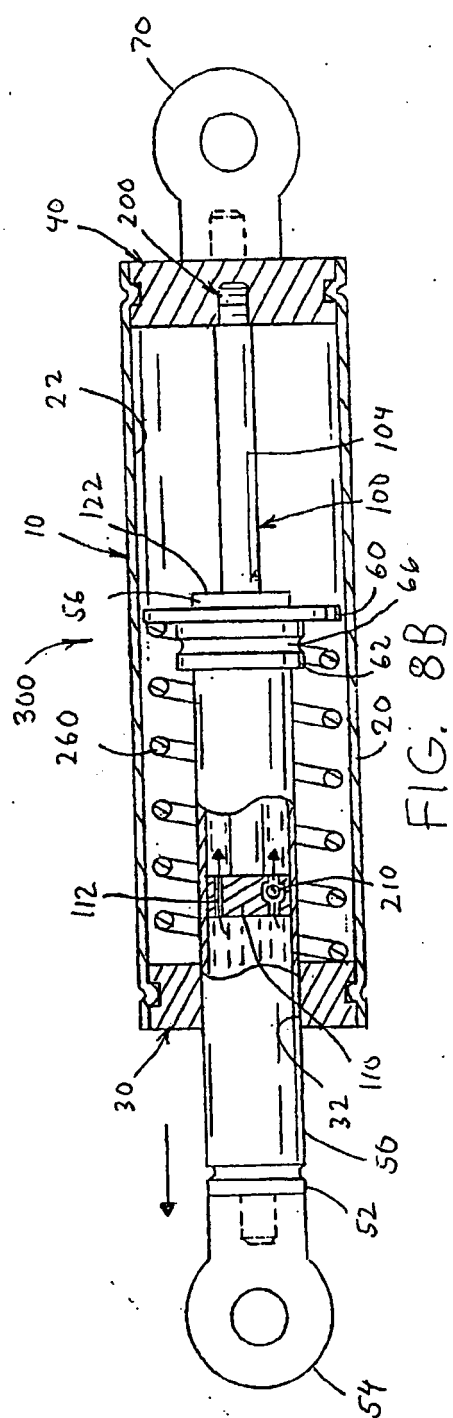
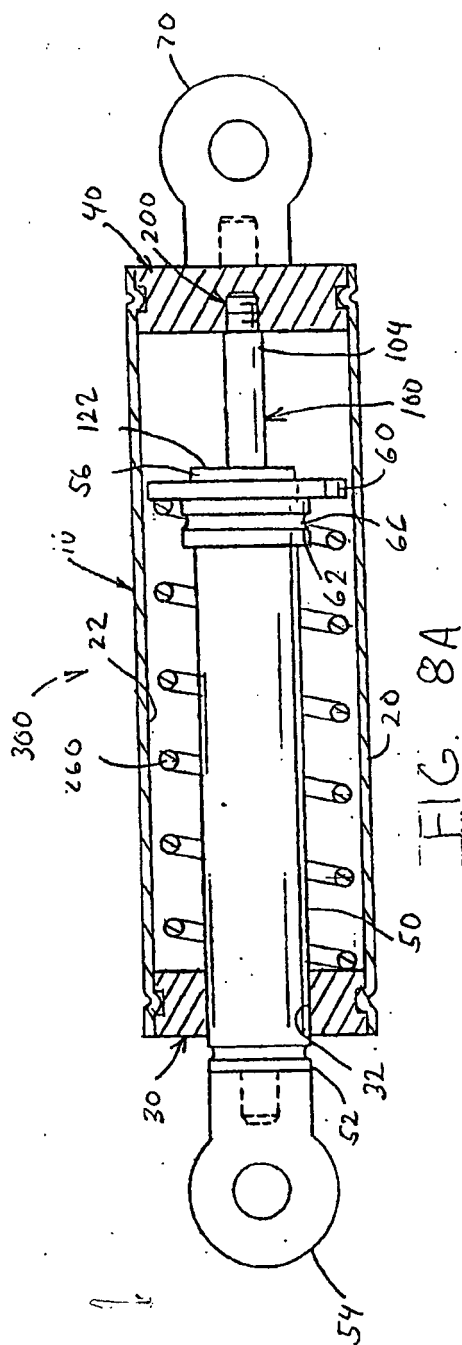
FIG. 5

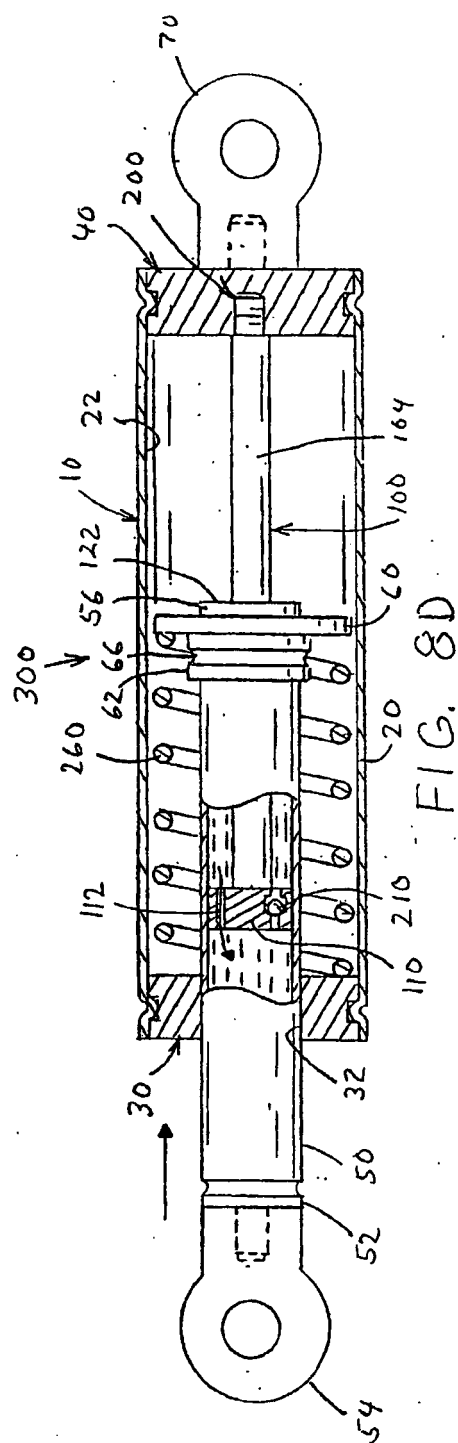
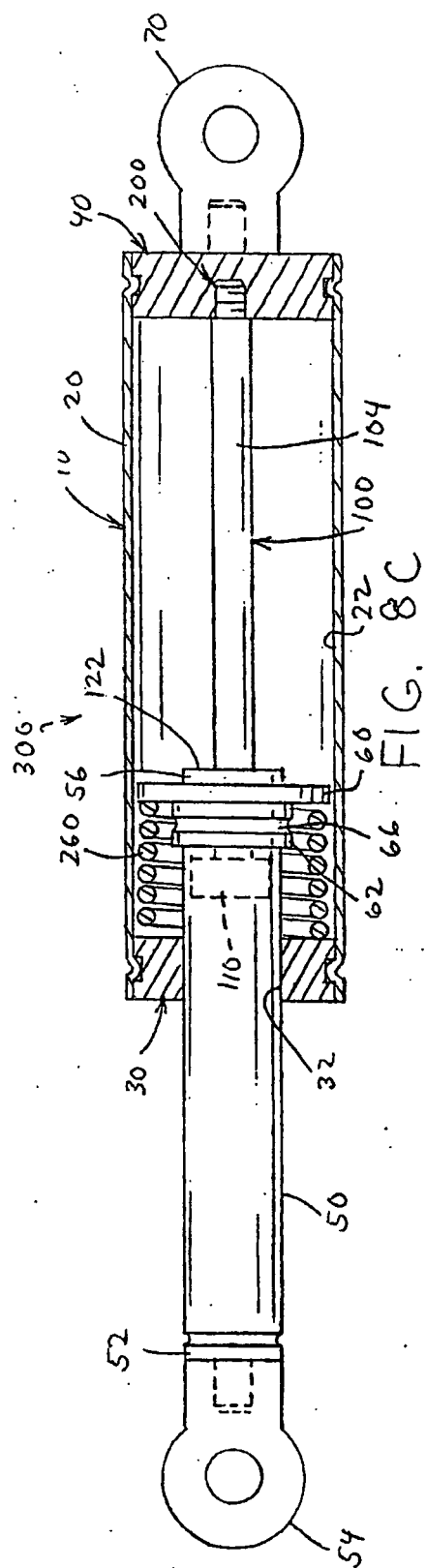












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